

Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks,
Recreation and Conservation
Minutes of January 20, 2005 at Southaven Lodge, Yaphank

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Bender Member of the Board
Chris Drake Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
John Fritz Trustee, Town of Babylon
Alex McKay Chairman, Town of Huntington
Joseph Miller Trustee, Town of Islip
Gary Olsen Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Dick White Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT:

Alexander McKay Chairman, Town of Huntington
Aurelio Colina Trustee, Town of Southampton
Ray Corwin Member at Large
Matthew Kruger Vice Chairman, Town of Smithtown
Thomas McCaffery Trustee, Town of Southold
Todd Stebbins Member of the Board
Vacancy Trustee, Town of Riverhead

PARKS DEPARTMENT:

Ronald F. Foley Commissioner
Tracey Bellone Deputy Commissioner
William Sickles Senior Superintendent
Colleen Hofmeister Contracts Manager
Thomas Hroncich Intergovernmental Relations
Coordinator
Nick Gibbons Senior Environmental Analyst
David Brewer Chief of Park Police
Teri Kopp Secretary to the Commissioner

GUESTS:

Lauretta Fischer Principal Planner
Janet Longo Assistant to Director of Real Estate
Jennifer Kohn Assistant County Attorney
Kim Kennedy Aide to Legislator Caracciolo
Erin Duffy Kim Shaw, H.S. - Ecology Division
Brian Beedenbender County Executive Assistant

Chairman McKay opened the meeting and noted no persons in attendance for the public portion. He introduced and welcomed Mr. Chris Drake, newly confirmed Trustee from the Town of Shelter Island.

CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES:

November 18, 2004:

Chairman McKay, page 4, middle for clarification of receiving of Green Key cards – should read “should take three to six weeks.”

Trustee Bender motioned to approve amended minutes and Trustee Olsen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

December 16, 2004:

Chairman McKay, first page, corrected as “Vice Chairman Kruger opened the meeting...”

Chairman McKay, page 2 corrected under heading of Camelot Property to be read as “trout lilies found...” Lauretta Fischer verified species of flower.

Chairman McKay, page 5 corrected first paragraph for “sponsor” to be changed to “Legislator Alden...”

Trustee Bender motioned to approve amended minutes and Trustee Fritz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2005 Parks Board of Trustees Schedule of Meetings:

Will be voted on, after further review, at February meeting.

PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE:

Principal Planner Lauretta Fischer distributed “Suffolk County Open Space Programs – Review Procedures” and Resolution No. 840-2004, “Suffolk County Save Open Space (SOS) Farmland Preservation, and Hamlet Parks Fund and Permitting the Transfer of Development Rights” to the Trustees. This resolution is for a new program that is in addition to other programs as described in a previous Planning publication regarding land acquisitions dated July 2003. Lauretta clarified the role of the Trustees under each individual program and indicated when their approval is required. In addition, Lauretta described the three components under the SOS program:

1. Open Space: \$30 million allocated for the acquisition of open space including wetlands, woodlands, pine barrens and other lands which are suitable only for passive, non-recreational uses. It is similar to the New Drinking Water Protection Program. No requirement to be in Nature Preserve per se but can be if needed. No advisory role for Trustees.
2. Hamlet Parks: \$10 million to be allocated on parcels of land for use as Hamlet Greens, Hamlet Parks, or Pocket Parks with the effect of providing public pedestrian-friendly communities for outdoor activities, playgrounds and other public gathering purposes. This will require an advisory role by the Trustees to review similar to active parklands.
3. Farmland Preservation: \$35 million to be expended for acquisition of farmland development rights parcels. No advisory role for Trustees.

Trustee Miller asked under which program was the Scully Estate acquired. Lauretta answered under 125E, #3 Old Drinking Water Protection Program, which did require Trustee review. Trustee Miller thought the property was already acquired before it was brought to the Trustees. Discussion ensued and Lauretta believed that the Scully property stated in the original planning steps resolution was acquired under the New Drinking Water Protection Program. However, since there was money in the 125 E Program that needed to be used up, it was requested that the

acquisition be changed and placed under the 125E program. This funding was specifically to be used for west and non-pine barrens towns within the Islip Township.

Chairman McKay asked for clarification under 125E, A and D in which the Parks Board of Trustees are required to provide approval and not just review. Laretta agreed and added that the Department of Real Estate cannot acquire those parcels without the Trustees' approval. Chairman McKay asked about the \$30 million in the new open space program and whether it is intended for acquiring only those properties on the new Master List? Laretta said no, it is open ended. Further, she advised that with the new legislation, there is a 2 year window to acquire parcels as this "SOS" program will end on 12/31/07. As such, quick action will be needed and some of the recommendations under the master list might be considered under this new program because of the time frame. Depending on the characteristics of the properties, it will be evaluated as to what part of the program should it be under. Chairman asked if monies are bonded up front and ready to go? Janet Longo of Real Estate confirmed yes.

Trustee Miller asked if the monies are not used, will they be lost? Laretta believed the monies would be lost unless an amendment is done and brought back to the electorate to extend the date beyond 12/31/07. Chairman McKay asked if the monies for hamlet parks are subject to the same expiration date? Laretta said yes. Chairman asked what procedure would the various towns use to tap into monies for hamlet parks? Laretta stated that there would be a planning steps resolution prepared and presented to the Legislature to be voted on. Also, there will be meetings set up with the towns in the next few months to talk about the different programs.

On another matter, Bill Sickles asked Janet Longo about the procedure when final acquisitions are done. Specifically, he spoke about the transfer of jurisdiction memos received from Real Estate and Bill stated what information is still missing and what the Parks Department needs. He would like to have tax map numbers, a deed, a survey (property boundaries) and any GPS coordinates of the sites. Janet explained that some parcels acquired in the pine barrens core are sometimes very small and would have no survey, but she would try to get the GPS coordinates for these types of pieces for the Parks Department. She also confirmed that this information was part of the Real Estate's new procedure. Bill added the importance for Parks Department to have all information available to identify County pieces and their boundaries of those belonging to the Parks Department for posting purposes. Nick Gibbons confirmed that the procedure has been inadequate and that it would be beneficial to have 3 copies of survey; for use by Park Police, field personnel and office record. Also, it is necessary to indicate under which program parcels are acquired. Janet said she would bring all requests back to her Director to ensure requested information is provided.

Trustee Olsen asked if at least the survey and/or GPS coordinates be made mandatory at the time of acquisition as part of the survey requirement? Nick Gibbons stated that previously, parcels that required a survey would be indicated as monuments on parcels 4 acres or greater. Janet Longo said perhaps survey and/or GPS coordinates could be included in the RFP and would report this request back to the Real Estate Department.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Capital Budget - Commissioner Foley was unable to give the proposed Capital Budget to the Trustees today for their review, however, he said that he would mail it out to the Trustees to review and discuss at the February 17th meeting.

ATV Task Force - Commissioner Foley reported that the first meeting of the ATV Task Force, of which he is Chairman, will be meeting on Thursday, February 16, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. at the Suffolk County Legislature Building on Veterans Memorial Highway in Hauppauge.

Trap & Skeeet - Commissioner Foley reported that Contracts Manager Colleen Hofmeister's unit has been developing an RFP to seek an operator to run operations for the shooting range once it is completed. This is progressing on the premise that the Town of Brookhaven will grant the County an exemption to their noise ordinance. Further details will be given to the Trustees as the project continues.

Peconic River Clean Up - Senior Environmental Analyst Nick Gibbons reported that Brookhaven National Laboratories are on schedule and they expect to have the remediation portion completed by the end of February. The restoration will start immediately thereafter. Some of the items requested as part of the restoration by Parks have been discovered to be more expensive than previously thought, so some negotiation on planting is taking place without jeopardizing the resource. Overall, BNL has been very responsive to all of Parks concerns regarding the clean up on County parkland. The clean up is continuing and weather does play its part in hindering some work and helping other work especially with regard to access into a very mucky area. Commissioner Foley added that he spoke to Les Hill of BNL who was very pleased with the success of the "mats" that were being used to cover vegetation without much harm and to vegetation at access points.

Addition Of New Staff At Parks - Commissioner Foley reported that the Parks Department is working on a hiring plan to submit to the Budget Office for additional personnel in areas of an environmental team, contacts division, and some maintenance and operations positions needed to deal with all properties previously maintained by The Friends For Long Island's Heritage.

Scully Interpretive Center - Commissioner Foley reported that Legislator Alden has designated the Scully property as "Greenways Interpretive Education Center which was passed by the Legislature and signed by the County Executive. Recent discussions with the Seatuck Environmental Group are ongoing regarding them as the primary tenant. An architect will begin plans combining County goals and Seatuck's goals for educational purposes. It is known that there is \$2 million for the environmental interpretive center. Questions of what the funds may be used for are still being discussed and have not been resolved yet.

Commissioner Foley reported on the following topics: Since the termination of The Friends for Long Island's Heritage, maintenance of historic properties have been going well. **The Little Red School House** sustained some damage when a frozen pipe burst. This prompted the Parks Department to do more frequent inspections there and at other unoccupied County sites. Will continue to monitor all sites more closely.

The appraiser hired to appraise **all County rental units** has completed his work. Parks is waiting for the Department of Real Estate to review the data and submit a final report. Deputy Commissioner Bellone will be reviewing report recommendations with staff when received.

Trustee Fritz stated his satisfaction with the decision from the County Attorney to approve **pulling of beach permits** by civilian staff and as designated by the Commissioner. Commissioner Foley stated this tool would be used in a very selective way to get park patrons to comply with the rules and regulations of the Parks. Question was asked about **Smith Point tollbooths or the camper contact station**. Commissioner stated that this DPW project has not gone well and DPW is taking steps to terminate the contractor. Parks maintenance staff will then take over that project and finish it up. Maintenance Supervisor Jim Barr said it would be less expensive.

Smith Point Fishing Pier – FINS staff said all reviews will be completed by next week and public review will take approximately 30 days to complete. After that, they do not anticipate any

glitches to occur.

Trustee Miller expressed his concern to the Commissioner about what he has seen as an ongoing trend for "lack of adequate staff" in the Parks Department. Specifically, perhaps, the Parks Department should have accountants to help them with accounting procedures. Commissioner Foley assured him that one key staff member, Mary Morabito has been hired and already has begun to manage the Accounting Division. A second position is being requested to fill the vacancy left by Rich Caggiano in the Accounting Unit. Also, the County Executive has approved new positions of auditors to fill in the gaps and the Commissioner felt confident that this will improve the workload at the Unit shortly.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Congratulations and Good Luck to Chief David Brewer of the Park Police.

Correction to December 16, 2004 minutes on page 5, middle of page, corrected to read "Commissioner Foley designated Captain David Brewer..."

Revised **Housing Resolution** as spoke about at December Trustee meeting – Chairman McKay did not receive. Parks office will provide him with a copy.

Memorials –Commissioner Foley will speak to Planning Director Tom Isles and get some further information on the status of the Memorials Committee by February meeting.

Greenways Educational Interpretive Center at Scully Estate – Chairman McKay reiterated his support for Trustee Corwin's statement at the December meeting that the \$2 million appropriated for this project be specifically used for educational purposes, i.e. exhibits and not only for building infrastructure.

Wicks Farm – Chairman McKay had a meeting with stewards, members of the Audubon Society for this land and Nick Gibbons there recently – The Audubon brought a grasslands expert to tour the site to give recommendations and suggestions regarding restoration of the property.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee White asked about status of **Third House** in Montauk. Commissioner Foley said he met the architect who told him the final specifications would be submitted next week for construction to begin Summer 2005. Trustee White said he was pleased with Commissioner Foley in their ongoing discussions regarding the G.A.T.R. site. The Town of East Hampton is trying to get services for emergency purposes but this would not include the wireless cell phone portion. Cooperation between the Town and the wireless company and County is ongoing. The process for both needs is moving along. The wireless portion would be under a license agreement with the County.

Trustee Fritz asked about **Westhampton Dunes**. Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Kohn confirmed that there is a deed for this property and requested to receive a copy. Jennifer asked about a particular walkway at this location. Bill Sickles stated that he knew of two walkways. One is a platform at Cupsogue Beach to be used for bird watching. Bill said that this walkway is underway as per Jim Barr of the maintenance unit. The other is in the Village of Westhampton Dunes. There is a walkway here that was built by the residents who had an easement for access to the ocean, but instead of building the walkway on the easement, they built the walkway on County parkland. This land is an ocean front parcel that is sandwiched between 2 existing homes. There was some question at the time this was done a few years ago, and it became apparent under former Commissioner Scully and Security Director Laton to investigate this walkway that is partially off the easement and partially on the Parks property. Nick Gibbons said options were

discussed of either moving the existing walkway and another was to make it part of the County's property and make it for public access to the ocean, but a policy decision was not finalized. Jennifer Kohn said she is awaiting the aforementioned deed from the outside counsel and will share the language contained in it with the Trustees at that time.

Trustee Fritz asked Commissioner Foley about memorial park benches. He responded saying that a few months ago, a standard bench was chosen. The cost is \$350 to the public and includes a brass mounted plate that may be engraved. Chairman McKay asked who decides where the bench will be placed? Bill Sickles said first it is determined if the request is to be on Suffolk County parkland, secondly to make sure it fits within general public use in that location and thirdly, the Parks Department picks it up at a company that manufactures it from the Hampton Bays area and installs it at the site. Trustee White asked if there was a program for repairs or maintenance on the benches? Bill said no, but the bench is made with concrete and clear cedar slats and is very heavy to lift and should withstand most damage.

Trustee Miller asked about status of the Wildlife Rescue Center. Contracts Manager Hofmeister said their agreement is up for renewal and the Contracts Unit is currently working on an amendment. Bill Sickles added that they have asked them to provide definitive plans to comply with the Health Department and Fire Marshall regulations, but that we have heard nothing recently about their expansion plans.

Trustee Miller asked for a copy of the Audit reports on Cash Handling. A copy of which will be provided to both Trustee Miller and Chairman McKay, who did not receive at the December meeting.

Southaven Stables - Contracts Manager Hofmeister gave an update. She said that Trustee Miller is serving on the evaluation committee, which has met once and will meet again on January 31st. Thus far, three proposals have been received. In addition, oral presentations will be received the week of January 24th. All will be reviewed and will help decide in what direction the Department will be going. Currently, there is a temporary manager at the Stables until the end of March. Trustee Miller expressed his concern about the lack of stenographic record of these types of hearings. He felt it is very important to protect the County and should be done for all RFP hearings. He also asked Jennifer Kohn to share some of her experience with this and she agreed with his concern. Further discussion ensued and all agreed that stenographic minutes should be made and be part of the RFP process.

Sears Bellows - Colleen Hofmeister reported that the former concessionaire defaulted in April 2004. The RFP was advertised January 20th and proposals are due March 9th.

Trap & Skeet - Contracts Unit is hoping to advertise this facility sometime in February with possible re-opening by Summer 2005.

Cupsogue Beach Hut and Cedar Point Camp Store - concessionaire agreements are due at the end of this year.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Trustee White motioned to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Fritz seconded and motion carried. The February meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday, February 17th at West Sayville.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Teri Kopp.